

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 110932
ORIGIN IO-14

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ROME FOR FODAG

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AORG, FAO

SUBJECT: FOOD CORPS PROPOSAL

1. DR. GABRIEL S. SAAB, FAO'S CONSULTANT, DISCUSSED THE FOOD CORPS CONCEPT WITH INTERESTED USG AGENCIES (USDA, AID, PEACE CORPS, STATE) MAY 1. SAAB EXPECTING TO VISIT FRANCE, FRG AND NETHERLANDS PLUS SENEGAL, TANZANIA, IRAN AND INDONESIA (AFGHANISTAN CURRENTLY DOUBTFUL). DRAFT REPORT TO DG SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION JULY 15. DIALOGUE WAS QUITE WIDE OPEN, DISPLAYING STRONG INTEREST OF USG BUT NEED FOR ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATION AND JUSTIFICATION BEFORE COMMITTING ITSELF TO ANY INTERNATIONAL SCHEME. IN THIS REGARD, DR. SAAB STUDY WAS MOST WELCOME AND U.S. AGENCIES AGREED ASSIST REVIEW IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE.

2. THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT A FOOD CORPS: (A)
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PAGE 02 STATE 110932

HAD TO HAVE HIGH RECIPIENT GOVERNMENT PRIORITY, I.E., VIA UNDP COUNTRY PLANNING EXERCISE, (B) BE STAFFED WITH VOLUNTEERS WITH HIGH MOTIVATION, (C) INCLUDE AN INTENSIVE TRAINING PROGRAM WITH ALL VOLUNTEERS TRAINING TOGETHER IN COUNTRY IF POSSIBLE, (D) RELY PRIMARILY ON VOLUNTEERS FROM SPECIFIC VILLAGE AND COUNTRY (TOTAL AT LEAST 50 PERCENT) AND ONLY SECONDARILY ON THOSE FROM OTHER LDC'S

WITH SURPLUS SKILLED LABOR POOL AND/OR FROM DC'S.

3. IN OPENING STATEMENT BYRNES (IO/AGR) NOTED USG HAS NO PRECONCEIVED IDEA OF HOW OR WHERE FOOD CORPS SHOULD BE NOR EVEN WHETHER IT SHOULD BE. OUR PRELIMINARY REVIEW HAD CONCLUDED THAT THE FOOD CORPS PROPOSAL IS A VIABLE CONCEPT. TO BE EFFECTIVE WE THINK IT WOULD HAVE TO: BE INTEGRATED WITH COUNTRY PLANNING; FOCUS ON VILLAGE LEVEL; WORK WITHIN A SPECIFIC TIME FRAME (3-5 YEARS), THEN LEAVING BEHIND ONGOING LOCAL INSTITUTION; AND REQUIRE NO NEW INTERNATIONAL MACHINERY FOR IMPLEMENTATION. IT WAS RECOGNIZED HOWEVER THAT SOME SMALL CONTROL COORDINATING/TRAINING MECHANISM WOULD NEED TO BE ENVISAGED.

4. DR. SAAB, WHO APPEARED WELL SUITED FOR THIS TASK FROM EDUCATIONAL AND EXPERIENCE STANDPOINT, INDICATED THAT DG SAOUMA IS OPEN-MINDED ABOUT IDEA AND HAS NO PRECONCEIVED IDEAS PRO OR CON. HE SAID THAT SINCE THE TIME ALLOWED FOR HIS STUDY WILL BE LIMITED, NO VISIT TO LATIN AMERICA IS CONTEMPLATED. HE ACCEPTED COMMENT THAT FAO COULD ENLIST VIEWS OF ADDITIONAL COUNTRIES VIA THE FAO COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVES AND/OR UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES AND TOOK NOTE OF FACT FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCES WILL PRECEDE NOVEMBER COUNCIL WHICH WILL REVIEW HIS REPORT.
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PAGE 03 STATE 110932

5. SAAB SAID HE WISHED TO EXPLORE POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIPS ALSO WITH FAO'S TCP AND ASSOCIATE EXPERT PROGRAM, TCDC AND THE WFP. HE WAS MINDFUL OF ONE YEAR'S LIMIT ON TCP PROJECTS AND FACT THAT WFP'S BUSINESS IS FOOD AID FOR WORK (ALSO THAT ITS CASH RESOURCES VERY LIMITED). HE SEEMED TO LEAN TOWARDS POSSIBILITY OF SETTING FOOD CORPS UP ON EXTREMELY LIMITED TRIAL BASIS DEPENDING PERHAPS ON NATIONAL FOOD CORPS STRUCTURES. HE STRONGLY FAVORS RECRUITING CRAFTSMEN/TECHNICIANS, VERSUS THE ACADEMICIANS WHO FIT IN INTERNATIONAL WORK EITHER AS EXPERTS OR ASSOCIATE EXPERTS. HE FULLY SHARES VIEW WE EXPRESSED THAT CRITICAL GAP IN DEVELOPMENT IS EXTENDING DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS TO VILLAGE LEVEL BY IMPROVING LOCAL TECHNICAL SKILLS.

6. OTHER POINTS MADE WERE: (A) NEED TO ASSAY ABSORPTION OF VOLUNTEERS IN LDC'S DESPITE FACT THAT SEVERAL WELL-TRAINED TECHNICIANS CAN GIVE MORE BANG FOR THE BUCK THAN ONE OVERPAID, OVERQUALIFIED EXPERT; (B) NEED TO CONSIDER SERIOUSLY WHETHER VOLUNTEER CONCEPT AS SEPARATE ENTITY OUGHT NOT SIMPLY BE PHASED INTO ONGOING PROJECT DESIGN

AND IMPLEMENTATION BY IFI'S, IFAD, UNDP OR NATIONAL

PROJECTS; AND (C) NEED TO PROVIDE FOR PREPARING THIRD
COUNTRY LDC VOLUNTEERS FOR REENTRY INTO THEIR NATIVE
COUNTRIES.

6. AS NOTED ABOVE, WE HAVE AGREED TO ASSIST SAAB AS
APPROPRIATE AND PEACE CORPS WILL BE SUGGESTING CONTACTS
IN SEVERAL COUNTRIES AS WELL AS PROVIDING ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION ON ITS OWN WORK THROUGH FAO LIAISON OFFICE.
DR. SAAB SEEMS EARNESTLY TO DESIRE U.S. HELP IN HIS
REVIEW. WE WOULD ENCOURAGE FODAG CONSULTING AT EARLY
DATE WITH HIM AND REPEAT U.S. OFFER TO ASSIST.

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PAGE 04 STATE 110932

7. ADDITIONAL POINT WORTH NOTING IS SAAB'S STRONG
FEELING THAT "FOOD" IS TOO LIMITING AND THAT FOCUS MORE
PROPERLY SHOULD ALSO BE ON RELATED VILLAGE AGRICULTURAL
ACTIVITIES. VANCE

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